



How Can the International Community Eradicate Poverty and Hunger by 2030?

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1. Introduction

The last 25 years have seen an extraordinary reduction in absolute poverty. Above all, the strong economic growth of China, India, and other populous Asian countries has led to unprecedented poverty reduction across the planet. In East Asia, absolute poverty, measured as the proportion of the population living on less than USD 1.90 a day, fell from over 60 percent in 1990 to under 3 percent in 2015 (World Bank 2016). In South Asia, poverty receded from 48 percent to around 12 percent. These tremendous successes in Asia led to the global Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of halving absolute poverty between 1990 and 2015 being more than met (from 43 percent in 1990 to 11 percent in 2015, see Figure 1). Of particular importance is the fact that this poverty reduction was accomplished even as inequality in some of these countries, especially China and India, rose drastically. As a result, poverty reduction was significantly slower than it would have been if income had risen equally for all income groups (Ravallion and Datt 2002). However, other regions—Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa—have also made notable contributions to poverty reduction since the mid-1990s, even if the goal of halving the poverty rate was not reached in Africa. Progress in reducing hunger and malnutrition has been slower, but still noteworthy.

Encouraged by these successes, the global community has committed itself, in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to the complete elimination of extreme poverty and hunger.

Is this a realistic goal? Is it possible? Which measures are necessary, and from whom, to achieve this ambitious goal?

I would like to address these questions in this short article. After briefly discussing some measurement challenges, I will argue that an entirely different approach than in the past will be necessary to reach this goal. It will not be possible to depend on economic growth in low-income countries, nor will development cooperation in its present form be able to play a major role. Instead, a much broader approach will be necessary, in which political and economic stability, the promotion of structural change, the development of social security systems in middle-income

countries, new trade policies, the reduction of inequality, a more active population policy in Africa, and investments to overcome country-specific challenges will have to play a central role.

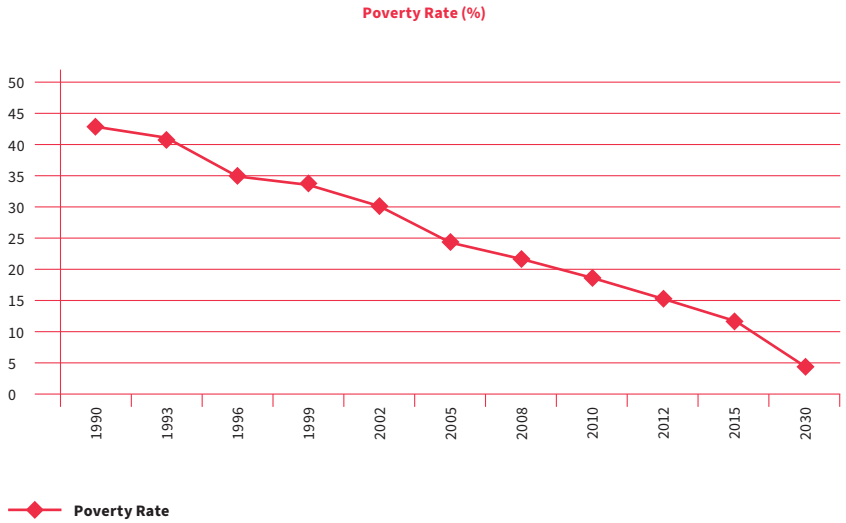


Figure 1. Percentage of population in the developing world living on less than International \$1.90 a day. Source: Povcalnet, accessed 3 February 2020 and World World Bank (2016). Note: Based on the 1.90 poverty line and 2011 Purchasing Power Parity (PPP). Developing world excludes high-income countries in Europe, North America, and Australasia.

2. Measuring Poverty and Hunger

The SDGs, with their 17 goals, 169 targets, and 250 indicators, suggest a high degree of precision when it comes to monitoring the global development agenda. A closer look reveals, however, that many targets are impossible to measure, indicators are missing, and that the necessary data are often simply unavailable. This problem already arose with the MDGs, but is even more problematic for the SDGs, especially since far too little has been done in recent years to develop the necessary database for the SDGs.

These problems concern not only the new targets or particularly challenging indicators, but also the main indicators for extreme poverty and hunger. The absolute poverty numbers depend on the international poverty line, which is updated every five to seven years. The poverty line is based on infrequent international price comparisons that ensure that it reflects the same purchasing power everywhere.

Unfortunately, these updates often entail unforeseen changes. In 2008, as the USD 1.08 (in 1993 prices) poverty line increased to USD 1.25 (in 2005 prices), we learned that global poverty was about 50% higher than previously thought, even though both poverty lines were supposed to reflect the same purchasing power. With the latest increase in the poverty line to International \$1.90 (in 2011 prices), the global poverty rate would have been significantly lower (by about 20 percent in 2010), had certain adjustments to the data not been introduced (Klasen et al. 2016a).

Although these periodic updates do not create any doubt about the reduction in poverty over time, the fact that there is so much uncertainty about the prevailing *level* of poverty is a major problem. If we now want to eliminate poverty altogether through the SDGs, such fluctuations in the measured level of poverty, which also vary from region to region, are very problematic, since they imply that the goalposts are constantly shifting. Thus, it is high time to translate the international poverty reduction goal into national poverty lines, which are not influenced by international purchasing power adjustments. This was suggested in Klasen et al. (2016a); the World Bank's Commission on Global Poverty recently made the same suggestion. This would make it possible to better reflect the progress made in each country with respect to the SDGs.

The situation is even more muddled when it comes to measuring hunger. A fundamental problem is that hunger is, to a large extent, measured using two different indicators, which sometimes lead to contradictory conclusions when observed in tandem. Moreover, both indicators are prone to methodological weaknesses. The indicator for malnutrition used by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is based on aggregated data and estimates the average number of people without access to sufficient calories. It finds that hunger is most acute in sub-Saharan Africa. It should further be noted that this indicator is frequently revised, and historical estimates have often been adjusted. While estimates until 2012 assumed that little progress in reducing the hunger rate had been made since 1990, calculations made after 2012 suggested that there had indeed been a substantial reduction, since the figures for 1990 had been adjusted upwards—resulting in a reduction over time (Pogge 2016).

The second indicator, used by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO), measures the number of children suffering from stunted growth and low weight. The data suggest that these problems are most pressing in South Asia and have been gradually improving globally over the last 25 years, though progress has been significantly slower than poverty reduction. As explained in De De Haen et al. (2011), there are problems with

both indicators and the estimates based on them. The FAO figures are based on very rough estimates and highly simplified (and probably erroneous) assumptions, while the figures on the nutritional status of children, which are generally more reliable, yield biased results for (small) genetic differences in height (see, for example, Klasen 2008; De Haen et al. 2011).

Based on these key indicators of poverty and hunger, then, we cannot say with any certainty *how many* people in the world suffer from hunger and/or poverty, or *where*. There is a considerable need for action when it comes to tackling these measurement problems (all of which can, incidentally, be solved). These uncertainties do not make it easy to come up with a course of action in the area of poverty and hunger reduction.

3. Challenges for Overcoming Extreme Poverty and Hunger

Aside from these measurement issues, there are a number of substantial challenges to eliminate poverty and hunger by 2030. Figure 1 would suggest that “only” a continuation of the existing trend of poverty reduction is necessary to bring the goal of overcoming absolute poverty by 2030 within reach. Gill et al. (2016) therefore propose a strategy for overcoming extreme poverty that continues past approaches and extends them by one additional policy. In particular, the focus should be on the two pillars of “labor-intensive growth” and “investments in the education and health of the poor”, supplemented by a third pillar, “improved social security systems”. It is argued that the success of poverty reduction over the last 30 years was mainly driven by the first two pillars in many fast-growing countries of Asia. This was enough to lift the bulk of the population out of poverty. To support those who remain poor due to various simultaneous occurring challenges (such as geographic remoteness, lack of education, ethnic minority status), and to successfully insure against local, national, and global shocks, social security systems need to be systematically developed to provide the poor access to a subsistence minimum and protect them from economic shocks.

In theory, such a strategy sounds promising, and if the three pillars could be fully implemented, extreme poverty could indeed be eliminated by 2030. However, it is unclear *how* labor-intensive growth, investment in the human capital of the poor, and the development of social security systems are to be secured in many of the countries on which the achievement of SDG 1 depends.

Table 1 lists the countries in which the majority of the poor lived in 2015, using both the USD 1.90 line and the higher USD 3.10 poverty line. First, it should be noted that data for very poor countries with a (likely) high number of the extreme poor

are missing, simply because data are unavailable for these countries (Gill et al. 2016). These include Myanmar, Cambodia, South Sudan, Afghanistan, Somalia, Eritrea, Yemen, and Somalia. These countries have a total population of about 150 million people, of whom certainly more than 50 percent (i.e., more than 75 million people) live below the poverty line of USD 1.90 and more than 80 percent (more than 120 million) live on less than USD 3.10 a day. Of course, these blind spots in our poverty statistics point to much more serious problems in these countries, which I will discuss below.

Table 1 also includes data for 1990, and shows the extraordinary success of the Asian countries in reducing poverty since 1990. It also shows how the geography of poverty has changed since 1990. Whereas in 1990, 50 percent of the extreme poor lived in East Asia—and mostly in China and Indonesia—that figure is now less than 10 percent (World Bank 2016, see Figure 2). More than 50 percent of the poor now live in sub-Saharan Africa. Only the share of South Asians among the global poor has remained relatively constant over time, at around 30 percent. This means that to overcome poverty by 2030, in particular, poverty in Africa and South Asia must be reduced.

Table 1. Total population (in millions) living in extreme poverty, 2015 (and 1990).

Rank (2015)	\$1.90 Poverty Line			\$3.10 Poverty Line		
	Country	2015	1990	Country	2015	1990
1	India	141.2	417.5	India	480.8	701.7
2	Nigeria	81.2	49.2	China	171.6	1012.6
3	Congo, Dem. Rep.	48.6	23	Nigeria	127.5	69.5
4	China	47.6	755.8	Bangladesh	102.2	99.2
5	Bangladesh	39.8	74.9	Congo, Dem. Rep.	61.1	29.2
6	Madagascar	19.1	6.9	Pakistan	56.1	93.8
7	Tanzania	17.9	17.4	Ethiopia	46.9	40
8	Ethiopia	14.4	29.1	Indonesia	46.5	152.4
9	Mozambique	14.0	11.7	Tanzania	35.1	22.4
10	Malawi	11.2	6.8	Philippines	29.1	32.7
11	Uganda	10.6	13.3	Uganda	22.5	15.9
12	Kenya	9.3	4.9	Madagascar	22.2	9.5
13	Brazil	9.3	30.8	Mozambique	20.8	12.8
14	Indonesia	8.8	102.3	Kenya	20.2	9.4
15	Zambia	8.7	4.4	Brazil	18.5	53.6
16	South Africa	8.2	10.2	South Africa	17.9	16.3
17	Burundi	7.6	4.8	Mexico	16.6	21.6
18	Philippines	7.5	16.3	Uzbekistan	15.1	0.7
19	Mali	7.0	6.7	Malawi	14.6	9 ^a
20	Burkina Faso	6.7	7.4	Niger	13.8	8.2
21	Niger	6.6	6.7	Sudan	13.8	14.7
22	Mexico	6.4	9.3	Burkina Faso	12.1	8.2
23	Pakistan	6.4	62	Mali	12	7.4
24	Rwanda	5.9	3.7 ^o	Zambia	11.4	5.5
25	Uzbekistan	5.1	10.9 ⁻	Cameroon	10.9	10.4 [*]
26	Cameroon	5.0	6.9 [*]	Angola	9.6	10 [^]
27	Sudan	4.9	8.8	Burundi	9.6	5.6
28	Senegal	4.9	5.1	Rwanda	9.1	5.2 ^o
29	Benin	4.8	3.8 ^v	Cote d'Ivoire	9.1	6.1
30	Angola	4.5	5.5 [^]	Senegal	9	6.5

Table 1. Cont.

Rank (2015)	\$1.90 Poverty Line			\$3.10 Poverty Line		
	Country	2015	1990	Country	2015	1990
Total population of additional countries without data on extreme poverty						
31	Eritrea	6.0				
32	Afghanistan	30.6				
33	Somalia	20.0				
34	Yemen	24.0				
35	Myanmar	53.0				
36	Cambodia	15.0				
37	South Sudan	11.3				

Note: ¹ data from 1991, ² data from 1992, ³ data from 1988, [°] data from 1984, ⁻ data from 1998, ^{*} data from 1996, ^a data from 1997, [^] data from 2008, ^v data from 2003. Source: Povcal, Gill et al. (2016), UNDP (2015).

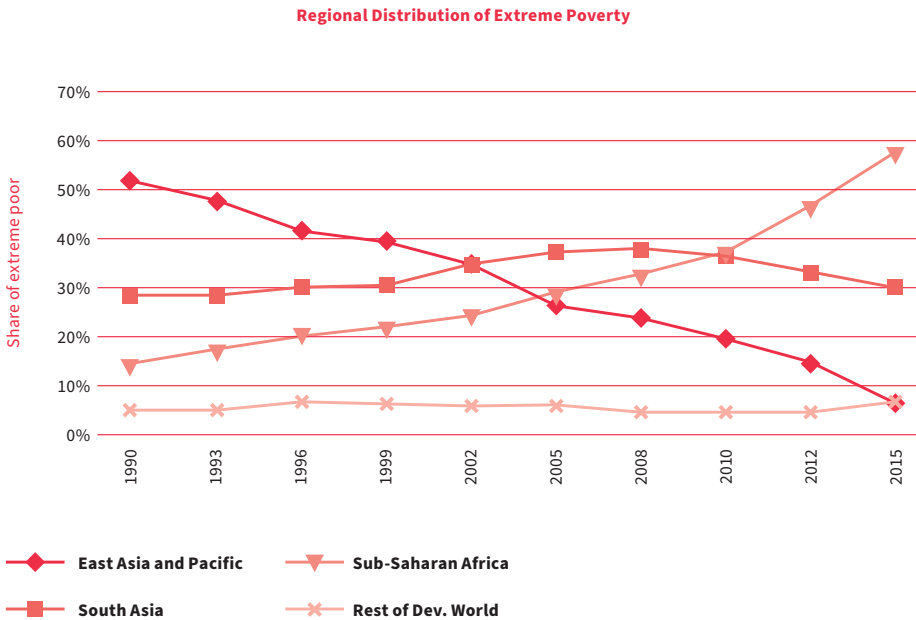


Figure 2. Regional Distribution of Extreme Poverty. Source: Povcalnet, accessed 3 February 2020. Note: Based on the 1.90 poverty line and 2011 PPP. Developing world excludes high income countries in Europe, North America, and Australasia.

The question that now arises is: which of the countries in Table 1 has the potential to follow in the footsteps of the Asian growth miracle countries and generate rapid and labor-intensive economic growth with high investments in education and health? It should first be noted that two elements were crucial for rapid, poverty-reducing growth in Asia. On the one hand, there was considerable success in increasing agricultural productivity, which raised the incomes of the poor rural population and freed up labor for industrialization; on the other hand, structural change towards industrialization, and above all, the development of a predominantly export-oriented manufacturing sector producing globally competitive products, was crucial (Gill et al. 2016; World Bank 1993).

Looking at the economic development of the currently poor countries over the last 10 to 15 years, very few are actually on track to meet these two components of labor-intensive growth. These include Bangladesh, Cambodia, the Philippines, and India. This is also true, to a degree, of Pakistan and Myanmar, and there is some evidence for this in Ethiopia and Rwanda, although it is still unclear how sustainable the improvements in agriculture and structural change really are. If structural change in these countries continues to progress and agricultural productivity improves steadily, there is hope that a large proportion of the approximately 230 million living in extreme poverty in these countries will have escaped poverty by 2030. Yet, as can already be observed in China and Indonesia (see Table 1), it is likely that a small base will continue to be unable to escape poverty by these two mechanisms alone.

There are also a number of countries on the list, including Mexico, Brazil, and South Africa, that have a major industrial sector that would meet the basic conditions necessary for generating labor-intensive industrial growth. However, structural change in these countries has slowed in the last 10 to 15 years, the industrial sector has dwindled, and these countries have become significantly more dependent on exporting commodities. This structural change in reverse has had much to do with China's role in the world market, which displaced these countries from global manufactured goods markets with their cheaper products on the one hand and significantly boosted demand for raw materials on the other. However, further poverty reduction through increasing commodity exports will become difficult, especially as this sector is now also ailing. In other words, we do not see any signs that these countries will be able to overcome their still-existent poverty in the near future.

The largest group of countries in Table 1 comprises African resource exporters, with an economy focused on a small number of agricultural or mineral commodities. These include Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Burundi, Tanzania, Democratic Republic

of Congo, Mozambique, Malawi, Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Cameroon, Sudan, Senegal, Benin, Angola, and Southern Sudan. More than 300 million of the extremely poor live here, and their long-term fate depends largely on the development of commodity prices. Although there have been improvements in agricultural productivity in some countries, which also contributes to poverty reduction, these advances are often thwarted by the commodity sector, which leads to overvalued exchange rates and thus, cheap food imports. Additionally, the commodity sector often undermines good governance and leads to bloated government sectors. The high commodity prices of the last 15 years (and better management of the resource boom) have contributed significantly to poverty reduction, but without structural change we have reached “the end of the line”, and indeed, there is now a risk of regression if prices fall. Here, lasting poverty reduction will only be possible if a sustainable structural change is initiated and, at the same time, further active investments are made in improving agricultural productivity.

Another group of countries with many extreme poor, which partly overlaps with the previous group, is in an even more difficult situation: here, the poor live in states where civil war is raging, autocratic dictators are in power, or the state is extremely fragile and thus, unable to carry out basic state functions. This group includes Nigeria, Ethiopia, Uganda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Uzbekistan, Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, Eritrea, Afghanistan, South Sudan, and Myanmar. While in some of these countries, conflicts are regionally contained (as in Uganda, Ethiopia, or Myanmar, for example), in others they affect the development prospects of the entire country (see, for example, World Bank 2013; OECD and DAC 2009). In the so-called Fragile States Agenda, attempts have been made to identify the particular challenges for effective development cooperation in these situations, and to identify appropriate means of interaction. Designing better ways to channel aid will not be sufficient to overcome extreme poverty in these states. Without the pacification of conflicts and the establishment of functioning states, overcoming poverty will be impossible. Development cooperation can only play a very limited role here. Instead, the international community will need consistent political commitment, UN peace missions with sufficient resources and a robust mandate, and the long-term development of institutions.

Another group of countries must expect the effects of climate change to complicate efforts to overcome extreme poverty. On the one hand, it affects countries with large coastlines and low-lying areas threatened by rising sea levels and more intense tropical storms. The most prominent among these are Bangladesh, the Philippines, Indonesia, Myanmar, and Nigeria. For these countries, significant

measures will be needed to prevent and combat flooding. On the other hand, agricultural countries that are highly dependent on rainfall will be affected. These include almost all the African countries in Table 1. In these countries, it will be particularly difficult to maintain or improve agricultural productivity.

For the last group of countries, there is yet another challenge: drastic demographic changes. After 20 years of strong economic growth and a significant expansion of women's education across the globe, one would expect birth rates to have fallen sharply. In Asia, most of the Middle East, Latin America, and many countries in southern Africa, a considerable decline in birth rate can be observed. This has led to a favorable demographic composition, with a larger working-age population, fewer children, and a limited share of senior citizens (for now) (Bloom and Williamson 1998). In most of these countries, the number of children per woman has fallen to about two. However, in parts of Africa, this demographic transition has either hardly begun, or else has come to a standstill. Figures from the Demographic and Health Surveys show that in Angola, Burkina Faso, Uganda, Mali, Niger, and Mozambique, fertility has stabilized at the very high rate of six children per woman, and in Cameroon, Senegal, and Nigeria, it remains stable at over five. As a result, the population will double in the next 15 to 20 years in these countries, and quadruple in the next 30 to 40 years if fertility rates remain as they are. The pressure this will exert on ever scarcer land, scarce water resources, and public infrastructure such as schools and health care centers will be enormous, and will make poverty reduction much more difficult. It will be important to understand the reason for this slowdown in fertility decline and to take appropriate measures to support smaller families.

I have concentrated exclusively on overcoming extreme poverty in the preceding discussion and ignored the goal of zero hunger. However, the obstacles to achieving this goal are similar in many ways. It will be particularly difficult to meet this goal in fragile and conflict-affected countries; resource exporting countries will make conditions for agriculture more difficult due to elevated exchange rates, neglect of agriculture, and poor governance; climate change will make food security particularly difficult in affected countries; and demographic dynamics in some countries will make the hunger problem even more acute. At the same time, two additional aspects should be considered. First, economic growth alone is not enough to overcome hunger. Indeed, Vollmer et al. (2014) showed that economic growth only makes a very small contribution to reduce child malnutrition. Instead, it is more important to strengthen maternal education, strengthen local health care (especially in rural areas), and invest in access to clean drinking water and sanitation. Such interventions are generally difficult and are particularly complicated to implement in fragile and conflict-affected

countries. Second, agriculture plays a more direct role in a country's food security than in poverty reduction. The reason is not that hunger can only be overcome with higher domestic food production. A country can also reduce undernutrition through food imports, provided the population has enough purchasing power (Dreze and Sen 1989). Rather, agriculture is important because, in most countries where hunger is rampant, it is most dire among the poor rural population, who mainly derives their income from agriculture. Thus, if one succeeds in increasing agricultural productivity, especially that of small farmers, their increased incomes will provide greater food security and help reduce hunger overall.

4. Conclusions for International Cooperation

First, it is important to stress that, as with the MDGs, the achievement of the SDGs will depend first and foremost on the policies of the countries concerned. The economic success of the Asian tigers over the previous decades, and the poverty reduction that came with it, was mainly achieved through their successful economic policies. An increasingly open world market for manufactured goods has also helped, and development cooperation has certainly made a supporting contribution.

Since the goal has become "ending absolute poverty", poverty must now be eradicated in all countries worldwide. If MDG 1 could still be met thanks to certain "overachieving" countries offsetting persistently high poverty rates in other countries, this is no longer possible with SDG 1. Since only 11 of the 37 countries in Table 1 have achieved the MDGs (including only three from sub-Saharan Africa), it cannot be expected that a majority of the countries in Table 1 will be able to meet the even more ambitious goal of total poverty eradication. For this reason, the World Bank has decided that the goal of ending absolute poverty globally is to be considered attained once the poverty rate falls below 3 percent. This could mean that even after 2030, about 14 percent of the population in Africa would still be living in poverty (World Bank 2016). While less ambitious, this still means that countries which did not meet the poverty target for MDG 1 must reduce their poverty and hunger at a faster pace than during the last 25 years. A stronger international commitment will therefore likely be necessary.

But how can the international community and development cooperation contribute? I would like to distinguish here between development cooperation in a narrower and a broader sense. The distinctions between groups of countries that I have outlined above will also be relevant here.

Financial cooperation will no longer be relevant for many middle-income countries. Technical cooperation can, however, continue to play an important role in

these countries. In countries such as India, China, and Indonesia, the main focus will be on supporting the establishment of reliable, broad-based social security systems that succeed in reaching the extremely poor. In other middle-income countries, such as Nigeria, Kenya, or Angola, the main aim will be to create incentives for increased diversification of the national economy. This includes a macro policy that creates competitive exchange rates and mobilizes investment in infrastructure, agriculture, and small- and medium-sized enterprises in the manufacturing sector. It should also address governance problems in these resource export countries and strengthen civil society groups. However, this policy focus requires long-term commitment and whether development cooperation can be effective in improving economic and political institutions in these countries is far from certain.

Forward momentum must be sustained in those countries that have the basic prerequisites for labor-intensive growth. This includes the promotion of infrastructure, industrial and structural policy measures, investment in training and further education, and support for trade.

Finally, countries in which the demographic transition has come to a standstill need a health and population policy that favors a decline in birth rate. This includes universal access to reproductive health and family planning services, further investment in female education, the outlawing of child marriages, and support for national population policies. Countries such as Rwanda and Ethiopia show that a consistent commitment could certainly bear fruit there.

In my view, this has already pushed us to the limits of conventional development cooperation. For other groups of countries, it can provide support at best, but other international initiatives will be crucial. The many commodity-exporting countries, for example, need much more than trade-promoting development cooperation. Since they operate in a global marketplace in which they have to contend with extremely competitive suppliers, it will be very difficult for them to develop a competitive industrial sector through structural change. What can help, however, is the substantial expansion, broadening, and simplification of non-reciprocal trade preferences, which are intended to benefit least developed countries the most. As Klasen et al. (2016c) have shown, existing trade preferences have already had a positive impact on the exports of least developed countries. However, there are too many exceptions, too many restrictions, and too much bureaucracy. Changes in trade policy, which are set at the level of the European Union for European countries, are more important here than development policy.

Support for the poorest countries in dealing with climate change also calls for new—yet to be developed—approaches. On the one hand, the promised

funds for adaptation to climate change must be mobilized and made available on top of standard development cooperation. We also need to rethink how funds are used. For countries affected by rising sea levels and storms, comprehensive strategies must be developed, including infrastructure measures, resettlement and land reallocation, disaster prevention, and disaster control. For agricultural countries, the focus will have to be on international research to develop improved seeds and production technologies and the expansion of irrigation systems (where sustainable and practicable).

Fragile countries affected by conflict and dominated by anti-development dictators pose a particular challenge. Here, development cooperation alone can do very little, and conflict can quickly destroy decades of productive development cooperation. Unfortunately, the international community's involvement with these countries has so far been minimal. Involvement in the form of UN peace missions in many countries listed in Table 1 has often prevented worse things from happening, but is characterized by inadequate force and a lack of mandate and resources. Increased political and military commitment will be necessary if we are serious about overcoming absolute poverty. As demonstrated by events in the Balkans in the 1990s, but also in Sierra Leone in 2003 or in Cambodia in the 1990s, a robust political and military commitment can make a major contribution to peace. A similar commitment will be necessary for countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Niger, South Sudan, and Burundi. The situation is even more difficult for countries afflicted by state collapse or authoritarian dictatorships. To bring about conditions for poverty-reducing policies, the international community will first have to make a stronger and more consistent political commitment. This would include, for example, international condemnation, entry bans, and sanctions concentrated on leadership cliques for governments such as those of Eritrea, Sudan, or Zimbabwe, strengthening opposition forces, and much more. Of course, this alone does not guarantee success, but it could increase the chance of change.

Lastly, reducing inequality can make an important contribution to poverty reduction. It directly reduces poverty and increases the poverty-reducing effect of economic growth. This requires comprehensive approaches: for instance, inequality can be reduced through targeted investments in health, education, and social security systems for the poor. Tax and public expenditure policies can also play a role. For example, development cooperation measures can promote higher, more progressive tax revenues through advisory services and targeted investments, and simultaneously support the reform and monitoring of government spending. Moreover, a more concerted international crackdown on tax evasion and tax avoidance

by rich individuals and multinational corporations in developing countries will also play an important role.

5. Outlook

The international community has set high objectives with SDG 1 to overcome extreme poverty and hunger in the near future—which is welcomed in a world where there is abundance in many places and no one would have to suffer globally from extreme poverty and hunger. But, as I have tried to point out, business as usual, even in the context of a favorable international economic environment, can only mean that we miss this target. Furthermore, the current economic and health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates that years of progress in poverty reduction can be reversed in an instant.

To accelerate poverty reduction, we not only need to tackle the measurement problems of poverty and hunger as quickly as possible, but we also need a new international development policy. In particular, we will not reach SDG 1 if only ministries of development cooperation address the challenges that I outlined above. If we are serious about overcoming global poverty and hunger, it must become one of the main missions of international politics for *all* actors, including the UN System as well as the G7 and G20. Coordinated by these fora, there must be consistent political, economic, and occasionally, even military engagement to pursue these goals. Moreover, these actors need to help especially poor countries deal with economic and health shocks by providing concessional funds, technical support, and debt relief. Hopefully, governments are aware of this challenge (Klasen et al. 2016b).

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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